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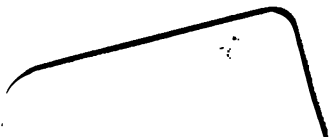
MARY
BRUNTON.



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MARY BRUNTON.

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Frontispiece

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

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17



MARY BRUNTON:

AND

Her One Talent.

By E. A. D. R.

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**‘Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for Thee.’**

—HERBERT.



MARY BRUNTON.



CHAPTER I.



ON one of the common open stairs, so often seen in our Scotch towns, a little girl had seated herself one afternoon in early March. It was one of those days in which a bitter east wind, combined with a drizzling rain, made the air almost as cold as in mid-winter; but this stair was sheltered from both wind and rain, and was a favourite resting place of the little damsel we are going to introduce to our young readers.

Little Mary Brunton was the eldest daughter of poor, but very respectable people. She had two

brothers older, two sisters and a brother younger, than herself. Her father worked for a builder at the extreme end of the town ; but he had suffered a severe illness, and during the winter there had been a great deal of trouble of one kind or another in the family, so that it had been a hard struggle, even with all the mother's industry, to meet the wants of six children, without seeking aid from the parish, to which the people of Scotland, in general, have a most honourable repugnance.

Through the kindness of a lady, who undertook to pay the small fee required, Mary had been admitted into an excellent day school, which was, however, more than a mile distant from where her father lived ; and as it was too far for her to go home and return during the mid-day play or dinner hour, she had permission, if she chose, to remain in the school to eat her 'piece,' or luncheon, which her careful mother always put into the school-bag with her books. But her uncle Peter was employed at the railway station near at hand, and she preferred, in general, going thither, and amusing herself with the lively scenes always passing, to sitting alone in the quiet school-room. But sometimes she stopped at the stair where we first introduced her to our readers. It was near the station, and opposite a large and fashionable-shop, which afforded Mary great entertainment, in seeing the

carriages stop, and the ladies and gentlemen going in and out.

This day, she had chosen the stair as her resting place, and was seated, with her school-bag by her side, and the little white cloth containing her bread and treacle, on her lap. She had a large biscuit in her hand (which uncle Peter, whom she had met, had given her), and she was hesitating whether to commence with that or the bread first. As she deliberated, she noticed a curious little head every now and then peeping round the lintel of the doorway. The hair was like a dark mop, tangled and tousled, beneath which was a little pinched dirty face; by-and-bye the whole figure emerged into view, and was such an one as Marv had seldom seen. Happily the blessing of ragged schools has rendered such figures less numerous than they were; but still, at times, they come before us, shocking our humanity, and making us feel that, even in our own land, there is a class of beings little more civilised than the heathen we read of.

The figure that stood before Mary,—for it had now stepped into the doorway,—might be the same age as herself (Mary was eight years old); but the poor child's pinched and meagre form made her look fully two years younger. She was literally half-naked. Her whole dress was composed of two garments, that had certainly never been made for their present owner.

The original colour of the upper dress it would have been impossible to discover ; while the one that hung beneath it, though of a lighter complexion, was equally dirty and torn ; indeed, both were so ragged, that it was wonderful how they hung together. A fragment of a tattered tartan shawl was over her neck, while feet and legs were bare, save for the coating of dirt which covered them.

As the little uncouth figure stood shivering with cold in every limb, her hands tucked up beneath the fragment of shawl for warmth, her eyes fixed with an unmistakeable expression on the substantial, but homely food, in the other child's lap, Mary's kind heart was touched, and she asked, 'Are you hungry?'

'Yes ; I have had nothing to eat to-day. I have begged all the morning, but nobody would give me anything.'

'Well, then,' said Mary, handing her one of the thick slices of bread, 'You may have that, for uncle gave me this biscuit.'

The eagerness with which the bread was seized, and the evident enjoyment with which it was partaken of, showed Mary how keen the hunger had been, and she inwardly resolved that the poor little creature should have the other slice too, for she knew that when she went home she would get her tea, and in the meanwhile she would make the biscuit suffice her.

The first slice of bread was greedily and speedily devoured by the poor little beggar-girl standing, without one word being spoken ; but when the second one was given, the kindness seemed to make her less timid, and she sat down on the other end of the step on which Mary was. At first the latter shrunk from this close contact with the dirty child ; for Mrs Brunton was not only a model of cleanliness in her own person, but had inculcated it on all her children. But, by-and-bye, as Mary looked at the little shivering, starved figure, the natural kindness of her heart overcame her aversion, and taking one end of her own comfortable shawl, she put it over the little one's neck, who, luxuriating in the unusual warmth, began to eat more slowly, and to venture on a little conversation with her kind benefactress.

‘ What good bread !—do you get such good bread every day ? What’s that black stuff upon it ? ’

‘ It’s treacle,’ replied Mary : ‘ sometimes I get bread and butter, and sometimes I get a scone.’

‘ Do you beg for it ? ’ said the other child. ‘ You must get a great deal of money.’ ‘ Oh no,’ answered Mary, ‘ I don’t beg for it ; mother puts it into my school-bag every morning—doesn’t your mother give you bread ? ’

‘ No ; she sends me out every morning to beg ; and sometimes I get some dry crusts and cold potatoes,

and sometimes I buy a halfpenny roll ; but mother beats me if I don't take some money home to her at night.'

'But what does she do with the money?' asked Mary,— 'doesn't she buy bread with it?'

'Oh no, she buys whisky ; and when she gets the whisky, it makes her so cross, and then she beats me worse than ever. I creep into the bed whenever I hear her coming home, and pretend to be asleep, but sometimes she pulls me out and beats me.'

There is a kind of freemasonry between children, which soon makes them at home with each other, however new their acquaintance may be, and, ignorant of the conventionalities of older life, they put and answer questions without the slightest feeling of impropriety. And so these two little ones chatted on, until they had learnt a good deal of each other's history.

Mary found that the little beggar girl's name was Kitty O'Brian ; that she was nearly eight years old, 'for she had heard her mother say she was "going on" for six when her father died, and she knew that was two years past last Christmas.' They had come from Ireland when she was a baby ; they used to go all over the country, and 'sometimes father worked at the harvest. She had a little brother, but he died before father did, of the fever. Father fell out of a cart and

hurt his head, and died in the hospital ; mother was a great deal worse since father died ; she drank a great deal more whisky, and beat her a great deal more. They lived on the topmost stair of a house in Smith's Close, in the High Street, and had two lodgers.'

This was Kitty's account of herself ; and in return she learned that Mary's father was a joiner, that they lived in a little cottage, in the yard where her father worked, at the east end of the town ; that her father had been very ill all the winter ; they had a great deal of trouble in the house, but they were all well again now, and father had gone to work ; she had five brothers and sisters, and she was the eldest girl ; she would be nine years old next Whitsunday. Her eldest brother was apprentice in the yard where her father worked, and the next one was at school ; mother taught the little ones, and *she* came into school every day.

Just as Mary had made this communication, a railway bell rang, which she knew indicated the time when she ought to return to school, so taking up her bag, she very reluctantly drew the shawl from the little one's shoulders, and bade her 'good-bye.' Her commiseration for the poor child had quite overcome the disgust she felt at her dirty unseemly appearance, and she went away with a heart full of pity for her, and of wonder what sort of mother she could have, that

would beat her, and not give her food to eat, and let her go about so ragged and dirty. And then she thought of her own dear mother, who had always taken such care of her, and been so kind to her, and she thanked God for giving her such a mother.





CHAPTER II.



MARY thought very often of the poor little hungry shivering Kitty, but she did not like to speak to her mother about her, for fear she would be angry with her for talking so much to a 'beggar girl,' but she could not help wishing that she was rich enough to give her some warm clothes, and plenty of bread every day. For several days she saw nothing more of her new acquaintance ; but one day when she was going to the Railway Station to deliver a message from her mother to uncle Peter, she saw Kitty plying her trade near to the entrance of the station ; with a whining voice and outstretched hand, she was running after every lady and gentleman she saw ; but she stopped when she saw Mary.

'Oh, I'm so sorry,' said the latter, 'that I've eaten

all my *piece* to-day, Kitty, but if you'll come to the stair to-morrow, where you saw me before, I will save part of it for you. Be there about the same time. I'm in a hurry now—good bye.'

Mary delivered her message, and her uncle gave her a biscuit, as he often did, for she was a great favourite with him. She ran back, hoping to see the little beggar girl, and give her the present she had received, but not finding her, she determined to keep it until the next day. Now, Mary was a generous little girl, and often kept any nice thing she had given her, to take to her little brother and sisters. She had quite a conflict in her own mind whether she would give them this biscuit, or keep it for her new friend, and at last she decided the point in favour of the latter, for she said to herself—

'Uncle often brings them cakes and nice things too, and I dare say Kitty has nobody to bring them to her.'

The next day Mary went to her favourite stair; and while waiting for Kitty, took out her Bible and began to read over her lesson, and to learn her verse for the afternoon; presently Kitty's mop-head showed itself, and then her whole person.

'What's that you're reading?' said the new comer.

'The Bible.'

'What's that? What's it about?'

‘About God,’ said Mary,—‘don’t you know?’

‘No, I don’t know about Him. Who is He? Where does He live?’

‘Why, don’t you know about God, who lives in heaven?’ said Mary, pointing upwards, and looking at Kitty, with inquiring eyes.

‘I didn’t know anybody lived up there,’ was the answer; ‘but isn’t God very cross?’

‘God is a Spirit, and He is *very* good. What makes you think He is cross?’

‘Because I’ve heard father speak about Him when he’s been taking whisky, and been very angry, and swearing at mother and me. That made me think God was cross. But I don’t know about Him.’

‘Doesn’t your mother tell you about Him sometimes?’

‘No, I don’t think she knows about Him either, she never speaks about Him; but when she’s in a passion, she speaks about the Holy Virgin. Who’s that, I wonder?’

Mary opened her eyes wide with astonishment; she wondered what this child and her mother could be; could they be some of the poor heathen her teacher had told her about, who had never heard of the Bible or God, and worshipped stocks and stones? But then *they* couldn’t speak our tongue, and this girl could speak English—it was quite beyond her com-

prehension—*she* thought every one knew about God and the Bible.

Mary was recalled from her reverie by Kitty asking—

‘ Who did you ask to give you bread ?’

(Mary had been reading the eleventh chapter of St Luke when Kitty came to the stair).

‘ I was reading the Lord’s Prayer—it tells us to ask God to give us each day our daily bread.’

‘ I wish He would give it to *me*,’ said Kitty, very earnestly—her physical wants evidently prompting her.

‘ Will He, if I ask Him ?’

Poor Mary didn’t know how she should answer a child who knew nothing about God and the Bible, so she did not reply to the question ; but it reminded her of her promise to Kitty, so she asked : ‘ Are you hungry to-day ?’

‘ Yes, I’m always hungry,’ said Kitty ; ‘ but *once* I got *such* a good dinner, and I’ll tell you all about it. One day I was standing at a window, looking at such nice things in it,—meat, and bread, and fish, and things I didn’t know what they were, but I think they were for eating, and oh ! there was such a nice hot smell came up through a grating. Just then a man came up, and said : “ Little girl, are you hungry ?” And when I said “ Yes,” he took me in, and said to a woman who stood there, “ Give this poor child a basin

of warm broth." He gave the woman some money, and taking a roll out of his pocket, he gave it to me, and went away. The broth was *so* good, and the room was *so* warm, I should have liked to stay there always, but I had to go when the broth was done.' As Kitty related this unwonted event in her young life, she seemed to luxuriate again over its very remembrance.

'I'm sure that was a good man,' was Mary's remark, when the tale was ended. 'Was he a gentleman?'

'No, I don't think he was,' replied Kitty; 'least-ways he had working clothes on.'

'While the children were thus chatting, a lady came into the entry for refuge from a smart shower. True to her vocation, the little beggar started up, and, with outstretched hand and mendicant whine, at once plied her trade.

'Please ma'am to give me a copper; I'm very cold and hungry; I've had nothing to-day. Father's ill in the hospital, and mother's got five of us, and can't get no work to do.'

During this speech Kitty had slipped the piece of bread Mary had given her under her shawl; and the lady reading confirmation of the story in the famished face and figure, put some pence into the child's hand, and went away, the rain having ceased.

Mary Brunton listened with horror to the string of

lies the little beggar girl so glibly uttered. For a little time she could not speak, but looked at the child in astonishment ; at length she said—

‘ Oh, Kitty ! how *could* you say you’d had nothing to eat to-day ; that your father was ill, and your mother had five of you. You know I’ve given you some bread, and you told me your father and brother were dead. How could you tell the lady so many lies ?’ exclaimed Mary, indignantly.

‘ Why,’ said the other child, ‘ Mother tells me to say so ; she says if I don’t make up a tale, people won’t give me anything, and oh ;’ added the poor little creature, shuddering, ‘ she does beat me so when I get no money.’

Again Mary’s heart was softened, and her anger passed away, as she noticed Kitty’s evident terror of her mother’s anger, and once more she wondered what kind of people these could be. *Her* mother taught her that it was wicked to tell lies and so make God very angry, and *she* never beat any of them, surely these O’Brians *must* be some of the heathens her teacher had told her about, and then she resolved to tell Miss Marr about them ; for she was afraid if she told her mother she should be forbidden to speak to Kitty again ; and when she looked at the poor little pinched face, the longing returned to share her meal day by day with the beggar child.

While these thoughts were passing through Mary's mind, her companion was finishing her slice of bread with an evident relish, in no way lessened by compunction for the untruthfulness that had so distressed her friend; for indeed the poor little Irish girl had never been taught anything else from her babyhood but deceit and lying, and was quite ignorant of their sinfulness. But Mary could not resist saying,

'Promise me, Kitty, not to tell these stories again, and I'll try and save you part of my "piece" every day.'

'Will you?' said the delighted child, 'well, I won't say that any more to-day.'

Mary had to be content with this very limited promise, for the bell reminded her that it was school time, and so they parted.





CHAPTER III.



MISS MARR was the teacher of the class in which Mary Brunton was at the Sunday School. Like many others, she had found that though her children could read well, and repeat many portions of the Scriptures correctly, they did so, in many cases, like parrots, with little or no knowledge of the sacred truths they contained.

Indeed there was little time for much explanation, for many of the girls came unprepared with their lessons, and had to learn them at school ; and by the time hymn, catechism, and reading, were gone through, there was little left for anything more. So sensibly did Miss Marr feel this, that she resolved to do what she could to supply the deficiency, and commenced a practice which we would recommend all Sunday School

teachers, who have time and opportunity, to follow. She determined to set apart an hour of one evening in the week, to read over and explain to her girls the ensuing Sunday's Scripture lesson. At first this arrangement was not popular, and only two or three attended, but very soon, not only all her own scholars, but some belonging to other classes came, and both teacher and children looked forward with mutual pleasure, to the weekly meeting.

Mary Brunton was never absent from Miss Marr's 'Bible Class,' as it was called. On one of these evenings, not long after Mary's acquaintance with her friend Kitty, the subject of the evening lesson was 'The Parable of the Talents,' as related in the 25th chapter of the Gospel of St Matthew, from the 14th to the 30th verse. After it had been read, Miss Marr said,

'My dear girls, there is no parable in the Bible that should come home to each one of us, rich and poor, more than this of the "Talents." Although this parable was spoken by our Saviour to His disciples more than eighteen hundred years ago, it is applicable for all time : for us, as well as for them. There is not one human creature, however poor, and lowly, to whom God has given the full possession of his senses, but has one or more 'talents' entrusted to him, and is as answerable to God for their right employ, as

these servants are represented in the parable to have been. When I use the word 'talent,' it is not in the worldly acceptation of the word : it is not cleverness, or proficiency in any of these pursuits which the world sets so much value on, and yet even these things may be made to conduce to the glory of God, and benefit of our fellow creatures. But the "Talents" we are now considering, are the good gifts that our heavenly Father has given each one of us to be used in His service, and the service of those around us ; or, in the words of the Bible, "to be put out to the exchangers."

'The talents of the parable were pieces of money, so called, and our blessed Saviour used this figure as symbolical of the various gifts He bestows on His creatures. Perhaps the most precious of God's good gifts, next to that of His dear Son Jesus Christ, is Time ; and each one of us here assembled will have to answer for the bad or good use we have made of it, yes, and for every moment we have wasted. Think of this, dear children, it is an awful thought for us all ; time past can never be recalled. Rank, money, power, influence, health, strength, opportunity, all these are talents, and for the use or abuse of each or any of these things, we shall have to give account."

'But some of you girls will say, "I have neither time, or rank, or money, or power, or influence, or

opportunity." I know that none of you have much spare time, and neither have you rank, or money, or power; but still to each of you have been given talents, and you are bound so to use them, that when your "Lord cometh, He shall receive His own with usury."

'But, you will ask ; what talents have *we* got? And how shall we use them? Well then, to begin : you have health and strength, cannot you use these for the benefit of those who have neither : have you no sick or infirm neighbour, to whom you might do a kind service in your spare moments, go a message, fetch water, sweep a room, or, better than all, none to whom you could read those words of Holy Writ, which, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, give life and light to "those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."

You may have more influence than you imagine. If your conduct is steady and consistent, if you are obedient to your parents and teachers, industrious, honest, truthful, and obliging, these things will give you more influence among your companions than you are aware of. You can always endeavour to set a good example to those around you ; and opportunities of doing good may offer to you unexpectedly. Never lose them or neglect them.

'Then to some of you, at least,—I would hope to all,—God has given a kind and sympathizing heart, and that of itself is a very great talent, if only wisely

used. How much good *that* can do, and it will never tire of doing good. A kind cheery word, said to some sick neighbour, some kind office performed ; none of these things will lose their reward, if done from love to God and your neighbour. Some of you may fall in with poor children, who have never had the benefit of school, never heard of God, or heaven, or who have never learned the blessed truths you have been taught; can you not do something for these? Tell them of the blessed Saviour, who was once himself a helpless babe, born in a stable, and who loves little children, and has said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

'There are, alas, many such children as I have spoken of, and if you would only try, you do not know how much good you might do to them; and then to you may be said those blessed words in the chapter we have read, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me." Remember, dear children, that to do any thing for God is the highest privilege we can any of us have.

'And now, dear girls, let us all, this night, determine, and earnestly pray to God for assistance, that we may diligently use whatever talents He has given us for His service, not hiding them in the earth, as

the wicked servant did, but giving them back to our Lord with "usury."

During the latter part of Miss Marr's explanation, particularly, our little friend Mary Brunton's thoughts had wandered to her new acquaintance Kitty O'Brian, and she longed more than ever to tell her teacher about her ; she lingered a few moments behind the other girls ; but before she could muster up sufficient resolution to speak, Miss Marr had left the room, and she had to join her companions. One thing however, Mary determined then and there, that she would try and do something for God—and, something for Kitty too.





CHAPTER IV.



HE next morning Mary awoke with her resolution fresh in her mind, and quite as determined to carry it into execution as she had been on the previous evening when she made it; and she felt somewhat impatient for the time to arrive when she should see her little friend; so eager indeed was she, that she could scarcely refrain from speaking of it to her mother, from whom Mary never had a secret before; however, she had sufficient self-restraint to say nothing about it, and went away to school at her accustomed hour.

The two children arrived about the same time at their usual meeting place, for Mary had rigidly kept her promise since the day she made it, of saving part of her 'piece' for the little beggar girl, and it would be difficult to say which was the most eager, the giver

or the receiver. This day I am inclined to think it was the former, for they were no sooner seated than Mary began to communicate her plan to the other girl.

‘Kitty, wouldn’t you like to learn to read, and to say hymns?’

‘Yes, I just should,’ replied her friend, ‘but you know I’ve no clothes to go to school, and then mother wouldn’t let me; for one day I said I wished I could go with Sally Wilson, a girl who lives on the same landing, to the ragged school, and mother beat me, and said she wondered what the like of me wanted with school, I’d enough to do to earn my bread; precious little I brought to her.’

It always made Mary Brunton sad to hear how Kitty’s mother treated her, it was so contrary to all *her* experience of motherly care and kindness, but at the same time, it strengthened her desire to do the poor child some better service than merely sharing her food with her, so she proceeded to unfold her plan.

‘Well, Kitty, if you would only learn, I think I could teach you your letters, and I know where there’s an old alphabet card at home, and I’ll bring it to-morrow, and we will begin, if you like.’

‘Oh! will you?’ said her little companion, ‘won’t I just learn,’ and the child’s face lighted up with a gleam

of pleasure, which gladdened Mary's heart. Then she added very anxiously, 'but will it be *very* hard to learn, if it is, I'm afraid I shall never do it. And I do so want to learn that about asking for our daily bread, will you teach me that too?'

'That is called the Lord's Prayer,' answered the other, 'yes, I'll try and teach you that; but Kitty, if I do, you must promise never to tell lies, or to take what does not belong to you, for teacher says we must not expect God to hear and answer our prayers when we are willfully sinning against Him, and breaking His commandments, and He says we must not tell lies, nor steal.'

'Well, I'm sure I'll try,' replied Kitty, 'for I don't want to vex you when you've been so good to me; nobody was ever so good to me before, except the man who gave me the nice warm dinner. And Mary, I should so like to have nice clothes and be tidy and clean, and know things like you;' but, added she, piteously, 'if you only knew how angry mother is when I don't bring her any money, and how she beats me and knocks me about, and says, "I'm no use, and not worth anything to her, for if I was sharp enough I might pick many a thing up," you wouldn't be so vexed with me; but, indeed, I don't *like* to take things that don't belong to me.'

A more reflective mind than Mary Brunton's would

have perceived a gleam of hopefulness in this speech of little Kitty's, for it told that, notwithstanding the ignorance and wickedness amidst which her young life had been spent, and which had sullied the purity and simplicity of childhood, implanting in their stead cunning, deceit, and untruthfulness ; yet there were glimpses of a nobler nature, and a yearning after better things, that one more skilful in reading the human heart than our young friend was, would feel, only needed the vivifying rays of divine truth to make this mental desert a fruitful field : It was not *all* stony ground. There was yet here and there a spot upon which, if the seed were perchance to fall, it might bring forth fruit, perhaps thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold. As yet, we grant, the field was rather unpromising, but Kitty's last speech had evinced gratitude ; a trait which in itself has often produced very important results. The child had shown a desire too, after something higher and better than the wretched miserable life she now led ; and she had also protested that she had no innate inclination for stealing. These, we repeat, were hopeful points in her character.

But to return from our digression. This day the children parted with renewed interest in each other, and both with a feeling of increased importance, for which we are not disposed to blame them ; the one feeling that she was now about to enter upon her

'labour of love,' the other that she was to learn 'like Mary,' who was quite the model for her childish ambition. We could have wished that in one respect it had been different with both of them, that is, in their resolve to keep the secret from their mothers; the one fearing she might not be allowed to teach; the other, that she should be forbidden to learn. There was one thing, however, which Mary did not neglect to do, and that was, to ask God, when she knelt in prayer to Him, 'to make her able to teach little Kitty O'Brian.'

The next day, Mary, true to her promise, searched, and found the alphabet card; large letters and small were on it. Slipping it into her school-bag, she set off with greater alacrity than usual, though she was always glad to go to school. The new office she was about to assume did not in any way interfere with her own lessons: she said them as correctly as usual, and was quite as attentive in every respect. But when school was dismissed, she did not tarry one moment to talk or to play with her school-fellows, but hastened at once to the well-known stair, on which Kitty was already seated.

Both teacher and pupil were impatient to begin the lesson. The 'piece' was quite a secondary affair, Kitty saying, 'she was not so hungry to-day; she had eaten some cold potatoes, and a drop of cold tea, which the lodgers gave her;' to which Mary said:

‘ Very well, then, we’ll begin the letters first;’ and forthwith the card was produced.

A willing and earnest mind was brought on both sides, and this of itself was an immense help; they never wearied plodding over the card. Mary thought six letters would be enough to learn the first day, and these were repeated over and over again, till Kitty knew from A to F quite perfectly; but now a serious difficulty presented itself, Mary could not give the card to her little pupil to take home, for they were afraid Mrs O’Brian might take it away—and she knew her mother would be angry if it was lost, as it would be needed for the little ones, whom Mrs Brunton taught herself, when the day’s work was over. In this dilemma Kitty’s natural acuteness came into aid.

‘ I’ll tell you what, Mary; I’ve seen letters like these, only larger I’m sure, on those big bills the men paste up on the walls and palings—I’ll just stop wherever I see them, and see if I can’t make out those letters you have taught me, A, B, C, D, E, F. You’ll see, I won’t forget,’ said Kitty, with pardonable self-complacency.

‘ That will be a capital plan,’ replied the young teacher, ‘ and mother often gets shop bills and the like, with large letters on them; I’ll see if I can cut them out, and bring them to you; it won’t so much matter if you do lose them, we can easily get some

more, you know ; but this card isn't mine ; it would vex mother if it was lost, for Miss Marr gave it to little Tommy. Now, you shall have this slice of bread, and I'll have the other—I'm hungry if you are not—but listen, there's the bell, I must be off—good bye, Kitty ; be in time to-morrow.' And, quite satisfied with the first day's work, the children parted.

Day after day they met, and the 'old common stair,' which at first was used as a mere shelter from the rain, seemed to have become quite dignified now, as it had been turned into a school-room. The poor beggar child was always the first to be at the trysting place, eager and ready for the new lesson. Day after day the same routine was gone through—fresh letters were learned, the old ones repeated, until Kitty had mastered the whole alphabet. She had duly kept up the little she had learnt, by exercising herself upon all the bills she saw posted up ; and Mary had successfully carried out her project of cutting out the letters from the printed notices and bills she found at home ; and having found the stray leaf of an old copy book, they were, by the aid of a little of her father's glue, transferred to it, and thus made available for her friend's use.

But the alphabet being learnt, there arose a new difficulty,—how to obtain a 'First Lesson Book'—the one at home could not be spared, as it was in use for

little Tommy, and Mary had ascertained that the cost of a new one would be threepence, a larger sum than she could hope to possess. But she had a penny that uncle Peter had given her the day before, when she went with a message from her mother to him, and she resolved to devote that towards the purchase, and perhaps Kitty could manage the rest. When the friends met, a grave consultation took place.

‘Well,’ said Kitty, ‘I could manage a penny, for I was quite lucky this morning. I saw a gentleman drop his handkerchief, and I picked it up and gave it to him, and he gave me a silver threepenny piece ; but mother is so angry if I don’t bring her twopence every night, to *get a glass of whisky*, and perhaps I may not get any more to-day ; but I’ll tell you what, Mary,’ and again the beggar child’s greater knowledge of the world stood them in need : ‘I know an old man who sells old books, perhaps he may have what we want, and we may get it cheaper for having been used. Let us go and see ; his stall is not far away.’

The book-stall was soon reached, and the much desired book found to be there ; its price, too, was within the children’s united means ; and, though it must be confessed, that its leaves had been well thumbed and worn ; the bargain was eagerly struck, and the valuable treasure taken possession of. This was a most important acquisition to Kitty, but she dare

not take it home, so it was agreed that it should remain in Mary's keeping.

Mary had never spent a penny more satisfactorily; indeed, her whole heart was in this new employment, and her only drawback was, not being able to communicate her pleasure to her mother; but an accident soon occurred, which was to remove all necessity for concealment.





CHAPTER V.



ITTY O'BRIAN, not many days after the purchase of the First Lesson Book, had arrived, as usual, at the stair first, and had waited some time without her young teacher appearing. At last she determined to go towards the Railway Station, where she knew Mary often went with messages. Just as she reached the entrance, a man drove up in a light spring van ; he jumped down, and went into one of the waiting-rooms, and then he came out with another man, who was carrying a young girl, evidently ill, or hurt, for her face was very white, and they laid her carefully down in the bottom of the cart, placing some cushions under her head, and covered her over with a warm rug ; then both men got into the van, and they drove slowly off.

Kitty could not get near enough to distinguish the

face ; but just as they were about to lift the poor girl in, she recognised Mary Brunton's shawl,—that shawl which had been so kindly shared with her. At once she knew that some misfortune had happened to her friend ; and this was confirmed by a boy, who was standing by, and of whom the distressed child made inquiry as to what had happened.

‘ Why,’ answered the boy, ‘ it’s a girl who fell down the railway stairs and has broken her leg, or her back, or something—she looked precious white, didn’t she.’

Even the poor beggar child was shocked at the seeming indifference of the boy, and poor Kitty turned away, weeping sad and bitter tears for the only human friend that she possessed, and who now seemed lost to her. Perhaps she should never see her again, and how could she learn to read now, or to say the prayer about the ‘ daily bread !’ And as these thoughts passed through her mind, the child, in the bitterness of her grief, flung herself upon a step, and sobbed audibly.

A lady passing by, touched by the evident sorrow of the poor little girl, stopped to speak to her—‘ What is the matter, my dear ? what are you crying for ?’

Mary Brunton’s broke her leg, ma’am, and oh, what *shall* I do ?’ replied the child, with a fresh outbreak of tears.

‘ And who is Mary Brunton ?’ ‘ The girl, ma’am,

who was teaching me to read, and who gave me a "piece" every day.'

The lady's curiosity was excited, and she questioned Kitty further, but without getting other information, so slipping some pence into the child's hand, she went on her way, leaving the poor little beggar to go to her cheerless home, more desolate and miserable than she had ever been during her young and wretched life.

But we must go back to our friend Mary. It was not quite so bad as the boy had said, though it was bad enough. Mary, as we have mentioned, often went to the railway with messages from her mother to her uncle Peter,—for Mrs Brunton washed and did many little things for him, as he was unmarried. On this day Mary had a small parcel to take to him; being anxious to get to Kitty O'Brian as soon as possible, she hastily ran down the long flight of stone steps, without observing a piece of orange peel which lay on the middle of them; stepping upon it, her foot slipped, and she lost her balance, rolling over and over until she reached the bottom, and there she lay stunned, until a porter coming by, found her, and recognized her as Peter Gray's niece; he lifted her, and carried her into a waiting-room, and laid her gently down, and then went for her uncle. She was still insensible when they returned.

At the moment Peter observed a medical gentleman passing, who had just come in by the train, and who willingly yielded to his request to look at the poor girl. He examined her minutely, and found that no bones were fractured, but that she had sustained some severe injury was evident, for, though she had in a great measure recovered her consciousness, a deadly faintness overspread her face whenever they attempted to raise her to her feet. The doctor recommended that she should at once be taken carefully home, and put to bed, while medical aid was sent for; a friend of Peter Gray's, who had come in, volunteered to fetch his spring van, which was near at hand; and as it was agreed on all sides that no conveyance would be better, the poor little maiden, as we have seen, was tenderly placed in it, and taken home by her uncle and his friend.

As we can imagine, it was a great shock to Mrs Brunton to see her little Mary, who had gone away in the morning so blythly, full of health and spirit, now carried in a helpless sufferer; but she did not waste time in idle grief; she undressed her child, placed her as comfortably as possible in bed, and leaving her with a loving kiss, while uncle Peter went for the surgeon, she busied herself in preparing hot water and other appliances, that might be needed when he arrived. Very soon the doctor came, and confirmed

the opinion that no bones were broken, but the poor girl was much bruised, and had sustained such injuries as might confine her to her bed for weeks, but he hoped, with great care, that she would ultimately be restored to health.

For some days Mary's sufferings were very great, but she bore them with great patience, and submitted uncomplainingly to all the orders of the doctor, who was so pleased with her, that he promised to give her a book whenever she was able to sit up and read it; every now and then he brought a flower and laid it upon her pillow, which was a great boon to her, for she was very fond of flowers.

It must not be supposed that Mary was forgetful of her little pupil; no, she thought often, and longed more than ever to tell her mother about her; she thought how the poor child would miss her, and wonder what had become of her; how she would miss the slice of bread every day, and worse than all, how she would forget all that she had taught her; and then she determined, that, when Miss Marr came to see her again, she would speak about Kitty O'Brian, for Miss Marr had come to see her whenever she heard of the accident. One thing Mary remembered Miss Marr had said, 'that if they could do nothing else for people, they could *pray* for them,' and so she never omitted, in her daily

petitions, to ask God 'to bless and take care of little Kitty.'

One day, about a week after Mary's misfortune, as Mrs Brunton was standing at the cottage door, she observed a wretched, half-naked, half-starved little girl enter the yard, and the good woman, whose heart was quite as tender as her daughter's, at once went in, and brought out a piece of bread to give to the miserable object, who, coming up to her, said, with a true beggar's whine, 'please, does Mary Brunton live here?'

'Yes, but what do *you* want with her?'

To this question Mrs Brunton got no reply, the child only hung her head, and began to cry. Again the question was repeated, but, as if frightened at her own temerity, the child muttered, 'nothing,' and turned away. Mrs Brunton thinking the child had asked the question merely as an excuse for begging, called to her to come back for the bread, which she did, but then run away as fast as she could. Mrs Brunton was soon too much occupied to think any thing more of the beggar girl. But the next day, about noon, a gentle tap came to the outer door, and when Mrs Brunton opened it, the same miserable figure as she had seen on the previous day, stood before her, holding a bunch of wild flowers in her hand.

‘Please, how’s Mary?’

‘Mary’s better, but—’

‘Please give her this flower.’

Before Mrs Brunton could question any further, the flowers were thrust into her hand, and the giver of them was making her way as speedily as possible out of the yard.

Mrs Brunton’s curiosity was fairly excited now; and perhaps she felt a little displeasure too,—for she did not like to think that *her* Mary, who was, in general, so obedient to all her commands, should have disobeyed her, by making acquaintance with such a dirty little beggar girl as this; but she determined, as she said to herself, to ‘get to the bottom of it,’ and at once went into the invalid’s room, with the flowers in her hand.

‘Oh, mother!’ said Mary, her face beaming with pleasure, ‘where *did* you get those?’

‘That’s what I want *you* to tell *me*, Mary, for I shouldn’t have thought the like of you would have taken up with such a dirty ragged little object as brought them.’

‘Who was it?’ inquired the sick girl, not without a faint suspicion of the truth.

‘Can’t you tell me?’ asked her mother again; ‘’tis some one who knows you. Yesterday, as I was standing at the door, such a wretched little creature came

up, and asked if Mary Brunton lived here. I thought it was just an excuse to get something, and sure enough she looked half-starved, poor thing, but not a word could I get from her, and I could scarcely get her to come back for a piece of bread, she ran away so frightened-like. To-day she tapped at the door again, and just pushed those flowers into my hand for you, and then started off like a hunted hare.'

'It must be Kitty O'Brian, poor Kitty! O mother!' exclaimed Mary, 'if she comes again, *do* let me see her.'

And as the pleading voice of the child fell on the mother's ear, she felt there was no cause for anger; and, in a softened tone, inquired, 'And who is Kitty O'Brian?'

'Mother, dear, just fetch your knitting and sit down beside me, while I tell you all about her; and oh, I have so wished to speak to you about Kitty, but I was always afraid you would be angry, and forbid me to speak to her, and then I could not have done anything for her.'

'Well, I've nothing particular to do just now, so I'll go and get my stocking, and you can tell me all about this poor, miserable child. I know you never willfully deceived me, but I'd never have thought the like of you would have taken up with a dirty beggar-girl.'

And so, while Mrs Brunton busily plied her knitting-needles, Mary faithfully related to her mother every particular of her acquaintance with Kitty O'Brian: how, at first, she didn't like to be near such a dirty ragged little thing; but when she saw how hungry and cold she was, she had shared her bread and her shawl with her, and how she had, day after day, and week after week, always kept a portion for her. And then, she went on to speak of the evening when Miss Marr explained the parable of the talents, and told them, that God had given them all some talent, and that they should strive to use it for His service. And then she told her mother how she had thought about her new friend, and prayed to God to help her to do something for her; and then, how glad Kitty was when she offered to try and teach her, their contrivance about the alphabet, and how quickly her little pupil learnt it, and how they managed to get the spelling-book, 'and then mother,' continued Mary, 'just as she had began to learn syllables so nicely, you know, I fell down the stairs, and now I'm afraid she'll just have forgot all she learnt; oh, mother dear! if you'd only let her come for a little while every day to get a lesson.'

Mrs Brunton had listened attentively to her little daughter's story, and as she looked on the earnestly pleading truthful face, she felt that there had neither

been concealment nor exaggeration in the relation, and, good woman as she was, she could not help feeling thankful that Mary had so early commenced a work of love to God, and usefulness to her fellow creatures, and not for a moment would she have hindered such a good work; her heart was full of commiseration for the poor little beggar, whose famished looks sufficiently vouched for the miserable fare and treatment she received at home; and the tears started to Mrs Brunton's eyes, at the recital of the cruel usage poor Kitty received from her mother.

'Dear me! to think she could have the heart to beat that little half-starved creature. She's nothing but a bundle of bones, and half-naked—and her own mother, too—I couldn't have believed any one could treat her own child so. Yes, Mary dear, let her come, and we'll try and keep a bit of bread, at any rate, for her; we shall never miss that; and if you can do her any good, I'm quite willing she should come; besides, it will make it lightsomer for you, for the doctor says he's afraid you'll have to keep your bed a good while yet.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you, dear mother!' and Mary flung her arms round Mrs Brunton's neck, happier than she had felt for a long time. It was quite a relief to her to know that the only secret she had in her young life was now reposed in that faithful

bosom. Moreover, she was happy to think that she had enlisted her mother's sympathy on behalf of her friend ; and so, with another warm kiss on the loved cheek, she added—

‘ I sha’n’t mind keeping my bed if Kitty may come awhile every day for her lesson. Oh, how I wish we could only teach her to read her Bible, and to love God and the Saviour.’

‘ God grant it ! ’ fervently replied her mother ; ‘ and now I’ll shake up your pillows, and you’ll lie down quietly, like a good girl, and get a rest ; for if the doctor comes and finds you with such a flushed face, he’ll wonder what has been the matter.’ So saying, Mary was left alone.





CHAPTER VI.



RS BRUNTON was a very practical Christian, not only inculcating the doctrine in theory, that 'cleanliness is next to godliness,' but carrying it into practice with every person and thing within her influence. At the time she gave Mary the cordial permission to resume her daily lessons with Kitty, she made a mental determination with regard to the latter, which she very rigorously carried out, and circumstances could not have been better arranged for her doing so.

The day following the conversation we have related in our last chapter, was the washing-day at the cottage, and Mrs Brunton had just wrung the clothes out of the tub for the last time, before she spread them out to bleach, when a timid knock was heard at the door. On being told to come in, the latch was lifted, and the beggar child entered.

‘So you’re come, Kitty,’ said the good woman. ‘Well, you’re just in time, for I’ve plenty of nice warm suds here, and the kettle’s boiling on the fire. Mary’s lying in a nice clean little bed, and I can’t let you go in to her till I’ve seen how clean I can make you too; you’ll look as well again, child, and then you shall have a cup of warm tea, and some bread and butter.’

So saying, she proceeded to remove the tattered garments, while the poor little thing looked at her with a half-frightened, half-wondering face, but, without making the faintest resistance, submitted herself to the motherly, gentle handling, so unlike what she was accustomed to at home. Like Mary, Mrs Brunton’s pity for the poor wasted little figure before her, overcame her disgust at the contact with such dirt; and as she gently lifted the emaciated child into the tub, she exclaimed—

‘Dear me, child, how thin you are; I’m sure you’re half-starved!’ And then, in kindly hands, Kitty underwent a purifying process, such as she had never experienced in her whole life before. From head to foot the work went on, and the little one, seeming to enjoy the comfortable warmth of the water, yielded herself passively to the operation. When it was over, she was carefully placed on a piece of carpet before the fire, and dried with soft warm towels; then she was clad in some of Mary’s clothes, and over all the warm,

cosy shawl, that Kitty had so often shared, and which was like a friend to her, was wrapped around her. Then she was seated in the old arm chair at the fire-side, with her feet on the fender.

‘Now, child, drink this warm tea, and eat your bread and butter, while I try and take your hair out of tangle a bit. Why, you’re something like now, if you had but a little more flesh on your bones. One couldn’t tell the colour of your hair or your eyes before ; but now you’re a deal wholesomer like. I’ll just let you look at yourself in Mary’s bit glass.’ And as good Mrs Brunton held the glass before the child’s eyes, she herself gazed with admiration on the transformation she had effected ; and a transformation indeed it was, for instead of the repulsive filthy little mortal that had entered an hour ago, there sat a really pretty little girl, with soft silky hair, and bright intelligent hazel eyes, though withal, a somewhat sad and subdued expression on her face.

But as regards Kitty’s feelings, just now she seemed to be in a dream, she could hardly believe it real ; never before had she experienced such comfort, and as she sat luxuriating in the kindly warmth, and partaking of the welcome food, with those kind eyes looking upon her, she was as proud and happy as a princess in a fairy tale ; indeed, she was so lost in the present enjoyment, that, to confess the truth, she had

almost forgotten her friend Mary, but she was roused by Mrs Brunton saying,—

‘Now, then, I think you’re nice and warm, and if you’ve finished your tea, you’d better go in to Mary ; but I’ll go first and see if she’s awake, poor child, she had but a bad night, so I’m glad she has had a sleep ;’ with that she disappeared, but soon returned, and taking Kitty by the hand, led her with an air of triumph into the little room, only saying, ‘Here’s Kitty come to see you, Mary,’ and then left them together, while she returned to the kitchen to complete her labour of love for the poor child, by washing her clothes.

‘Why, Kitty,’ exclaimed Mary, raising herself up in her little bed, ‘is that you ? how nice you look, and your hair so nice and smooth. Did mother do that ?’

‘Yes,’ said the child, and still appreciating the creature comforts more than anything else, she added, ‘and she gave me such nice warm tea, and bread and butter, it was so good ; and I am so warm and comfortable,’ this she said with a look almost of affection, at the friendly shawl wrapped around her, which she drew, if possible, yet closer.

‘Well, Kitty,’ said her sick friend, ‘I am very glad to see you again ; I thought of you often, and was so sorry when I thought how you would go to the stair, perhaps day after day, and neither get your *piac*

nor your lesson, I was afraid you would forget all you had learnt—and do you know, Kitty, I prayed to God for you, and asked Him to take care of you, and send some one to teach you, and I do think He heard me, for soon after mother brought me the flowers. How did you find out where I lived?’

‘Why,’ answered the child, ‘the day you was hurt I saw you put into the cart, so I followed it for a long way, until a policeman stopped me, and asked me what I was running after the cart for, and I didn’t like to tell him, and while I was a talking to him, the cart turned out of the road, and I couldn’t see it no more, and I was obliged to turn back, ’cause I was afeard of the police, but I knew the place where I turned, and so I came back the next day, and the next again, and went down all the roads and lanes till I came to a woodyard, for I minded you told me your father lived in one, and then I met a boy, and I asked him if there was one Brunton lived hereabout, and he said, “aye, there was one of that name lived in the little cottage, ben the yard,” so I went in and I saw a woman standing at the door, and I asked her if you lived there, and then I was frightened and ran away ; and then I thought I would go to the fields and get some flowers, and come and ask for you every day—and oh, Mary, I was so glad when your mother told me to-day to come in, and that she would let me see you, but that I must

be made clean first, and I would have let *her* do anything ; oh ! if *my* mother was only as kind !' The last sentence was uttered with a sigh, that told too truly the sad experience of that young life.

Mary, very wisely, took no notice of the last part of her friend's recital, but said that her mother had given permission for her to come every day, and that she would get a *piece* every day, too ; ' And then, Kitty, you can get my books, and I can teach you to sew, and oh, it will be so nice to have you beside me. I shan't mind lying in my bed at all,—only,' she added, after a moment's reflection, ' I *should* like to be up to help mother.'

' Couldn't I help,' said her little pupil, ' I can fetch water, and I often go to the shop for mother, and get bread and tea—and whisky.'

' Yes, you could fetch water for her,' responded Mary, wisely ignoring the rest of Katie's accomplishments, 'but I'm afraid you've forgotten all your lessons.'

No, I havn't, I always said my hymn, "Gentle Jesus," to myself every day, and I have asked Our Father to give me my daily bread, and I think, Mary, He must have given it to me to-day, it was *so good*. I never had anything so fine, except the soup the man gave me.'

Don't smile, dear young readers, at poor little Kitty's somewhat sensual idea of an answer to prayer ;

it was the dawn of faith, of an imperfect faith, perhaps, but it was the dawn of that faith which believes that 'every good and every perfect gift cometh from above.' Such faith, imperfect as it is, will not be despised by Him who hath said, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God hath perfected praise.'

To return, however, to pupil and teacher. The former was sent to Mrs Brunton for the lesson-books ; and the truth of her assertion was fairly proved, for she had scarcely forgotten anything her friend had taught her. Mary had carefully kept the "First Lesson Book," that had been purchased so satisfactorily just before her accident, and this day Kitty resumed her lessons in it. Her education, or rather, we should say, her upbringing, if it had done nothing better for her, had sharpened her wits, which, added to a great anxiety to learn, made her a most satisfactory scholar ; and, on the other hand, the young teacher possessed a great share of patience ; so that it being a labour of love on both sides, time passed away very happily. When sufficient time had been passed over the books, a sewing lesson was proposed, and Kitty was directed to the drawer where Mary's little work-box was carefully kept,—for it had been given her as a reward at school for the first garment she had been able to complete by herself.

Great was the admiration of the child, as she

looked at her friend's treasure and all its contents. 'What's this for? and this, and this?' as scissors, thread, and thimble, were produced in succession. 'How did you get the thread into that little thin thing? Oh, how sharp it is!' These were the exclamations, as Mary successfully threaded a needle, and then handed it to Kitty, who forthwith thought proper to test its point upon her finger; but then the lesson was seriously proceeded with, and before it was ended, the young pupil had succeeded in putting in several stitches *almost* to the sewing mistress' satisfaction. She pronounced it, at any rate, 'very good for the first time;' and then books, and work, and box, were put away, and the little one was allowed to gratify her curiosity by looking at the various objects in the room.

'Everything is so nice and clean,' said the child, who, although brought up among dirt and squalor, seemed quite able to appreciate the reverse of the picture; 'and such pretty blue and white curtains—Oh! I think if I slept in such a bed I should never like to leave it—and such pretty bits of print the bed-cover is made of—are they bits of your frocks, Mary?'

'O no!' said Mary, 'I never had as many frocks; but mother had gathered up a great many pieces, and then we got some given us, and she and I made it between us at spare times: it was the first *real* piece of work I did.'

Here Mrs Brunton put in her head to say, that ‘Kitty would get a little broth with them, and then she might sit beside Mary a little while again, until her own clothes were quite dry;’ and to this arrangement we may be sure there was no dissenting voice.

But Mrs Brunton found she had tried a very hazardous experiment in washing the poor little girl’s rags, and one that she could by no means repeat; for it taxed her ingenuity as well as her time not a little, so to fasten them together as that they could be made to cover the child decently; but she consoled herself, as she re-dressed Kitty in them, by saying that ‘at any rate they were a *deal wholesomer.*’ And then the little maiden was dismissed, with permission to come every day, for a couple of hours, to ‘get her lessons.’





CHAPTER VII.



LITTY O'BRIAN never failed to avail herself of the permission so kindly given by good Mrs Brunton, and very few days had elapsed before she had really imbibed something like orderly habits. As soon as she entered the cottage, she went to the sink, where soap and towel awaited her, and there went through a cleansing process, which materially improved her appearance, winding up with a little hair-dressing, and lastly, a peep into the little looking-glass which hung upon the wall ; and then she went beside Mary, and diligently applied herself to her tasks of reading, and sewing, and learning hymns, etc. ; and in all she made very satisfactory progress. Often, too, she was allowed to remain a little longer than the allotted time, and gratify her own desire of 'doing something to help instead of Mary.' So she

would fetch water from the well, and, under Mrs Brunton's direction, perform various little household duties. Then Mrs Brunton would produce the homely meal, which she never omitted to set aside for the child, and to which her keen appetite did ample justice.

Thus week after week passed away, but without removing one great difficulty that Mary and her mother felt on behalf of their little friend,—how to get her more decently and comfortably clad.

‘It goes to my heart,’ said Mrs Brunton, ‘to see the child in those old rags; she’s half naked, and her poor bare feet and legs—I might be able to make out a petticoat or so; but as to a frock, I’ve only what will keep you children decent, and hard matter to do that too.’

‘I think,’ said Mary, ‘when Miss Marr comes again I’ll speak to her about Kitty; if we could get any old clothes—I could make them up for her if you would fit them for me, mother; and then, if we could manage to get her to the Church and the School, and to Miss Marr’s Bible Class, she would learn a great deal more than I can teach her.’

An unlooked for opportunity occurred very soon, of carrying Mary’s wishes in behalf of little Kitty into execution. One day Mr Whitson, the clergyman of the Church which the Bruntons attended, called, accom-

panied by his wife. He had missed Mary from the school, and, on inquiry, had heard of the child's accident.

‘ Good morning, Mrs Brunton ! I was very sorry to hear that your little girl had met with such a sad accident. Mrs Whitson and I have come to see her, and to know if there is anything she is in want of.’

‘ I thank you, Sir,—I am sure it is very good of you and your lady to take the trouble. Mary has a deal less pain than when first she was brought home, and the fever has almost left her ; but Dr Wylie is afraid she has injured her hip and back, and says she will not be able to walk for a good while yet ; but she is very good and patient, and quite cheery like ; will you please to walk in and see her, she'll be real proud of your visit.’

Saying this, the good mother led the way into Mary's little room, feeling not at all displeased that her child should be found engaged in her self-imposed task. She was propped up in bed by some pillows, while her little pupil was by her side, half leaning over the bed, with a Spelling-book in her hand. A deep blush passed over Mary's face at sight of her visitors, but Kitty was by no means abashed. Mrs Whitson, on seeing the children, looked first at one and then at the other, and exclaimed—

‘ I do think I saw you both one day seated on a common stair opposite the Railway Station, when I

took shelter from a shower ; and,' continued Mrs Whitson, looking at Kitty, 'you are the same little girl I found crying near the Railway Station because Mary Brunton had broken her leg, and couldn't teach you to read ; but I think she seems to be teaching you now, is she not?'

Both children looked a little abashed at the lady's recognition, for both of them remembered the falsehoods by which the beggar child had drawn forth the lady's benevolence. However, nothing was said on that subject,—both the clergyman and his wife questioning Mary as to her connection with Kitty, but not getting much information from the former, they inquired more particularly of Mrs Brunton, who told them what she had learned from her daughter as to the acquaintanceship, and concluded by saying, 'I am afraid she has a bad mother, poor little thing ! she beats her and sends her out to beg, and the child is half-starved and naked—it goes to my heart to see her so ragged, but I have nothing to give her myself except an old petticoat, for I've no more than will keep the children tidy—we've had so much trouble in the house, that I've had a hard fight to keep *them* decent ; but if I could get an old thing or two, Mary and I would soon patch them up for the child. I'm real sorry to see her poor bare feet and legs—none of my own ever went barefoot.'

‘Well, Mrs Brunton, it is very good of you to take such an interest in this poor little girl,’ said Mrs Whitson, ‘I think perhaps I can help you to an old garment or two ; when I get home, I will see what I can find for you ; you and Mary will have your reward hereafter for this labour of love.’

‘Thank you ma’am ; I think Kitty’s not such a bad child, and if we could make her decent-like, and get her to the Sunday school, and to Church, may be she might not turn out so badly ; and I’m glad to let her come here, for Mary’s a deal more cheery like since she’s had Kitty to teach again,—for it’s wearisome for the poor thing to be lying there alone,—I’ve so much to do in and out of the house, that I can’t be much beside her, though she’s wonderful patient, and does not give much trouble.’

When the clergyman and his wife had taken their leave, Mrs Brunton hastened to Mary’s room, quite pleased that there was a prospect of their cherished wish being carried out very soon, and told her of Mrs Whitson’s promise.

‘I’m so glad, mother, I’ll try and waken an hour sooner every morning, to get on with the stockings I’m knitting for father, and then I shall have more time to work for Kitty ; she’s very good and is beginning to learn quite well, and doesn’t prick her finger near so often as she did.’

It was not long before Mrs Whitson's promise was fulfilled, and quite a large parcel made its appearance at the Bruntons' cottage, which, to Mary's great delight, was taken to her bed to be opened by herself; and as each article was separately taken out, it was examined by both mother and daughter, with pleasure and admiration. There was a dress, a little shawl, a hat, and several other useful things, amongst them the much wished for shoes and stockings.

'Well, I declare,' said good Mrs Brunton, at length, 'Kitty will be comfortable now, we'll begin to-morrow; she can unpick some of the things, and I will get them fitted, and if we both work hard, I think we can turn her out quite respectable; what a nice black straw hat, to be sure, and it fits you quite neat, one would think it had been made on purpose.'

The last part of this speech was addressed to Kitty, as Mrs Brunton tried the hat upon her head. The child sat in wondering astonishment, hardly realizing that all these nice things were for her; but when Mary explained, that a good lady,—the clergyman's wife, whom she had seen a few days ago,—had sent these things for her, and her mother and herself would make them up, and then she would be neat and clean. When this had been made clear to Kitty's understanding, her eyes sparkled, and her really pretty face beamed with delight, as she exclaimed,

‘For me! all for me! I never had such clothes in all my life—how nice it will be, I did so want to be like Mary; and is that hat for me, too? I never had one upon my head before. I wonder, Mary, if God told the good lady to send them for me!’

‘Yes, Kitty, mother says that God puts it into the hearts of people to be kind to the poor, and that we should always thank Him for every thing we get.’ ‘Willing hands make quick work,’ says the proverb, and never was it more fully verified than with the Bruntons. Mother and daughter laboured with nimble fingers and loving hearts for the poor outcast’s benefit, who, though she owned a mother, had never known a mother’s care or kindness. The love of drink had long since driven all other love out of the maternal bosom.

Garment after garment was completed, and at last came the day that Kitty was to be dressed in her new attire; it was difficult to say whether she or her kind friends felt most pleasure on the occasion. The operation took place in Mary’s little room, after the child had undergone a thorough ablution, under the good mother’s hands. For Mrs Brunton had expressed her determination, that ‘she would make her clean from top to toe.’ This being done, the dressing proceeded, and went on most satisfactorily, until it came to the shoes and stockings; the latter were drawn on,

and Kitty looked at her little feet, in their novel adornments, with great complacency; but when the shoes, with some little difficulty, were put on, she rebelled at once.

‘Not the shoes, please, not the shoes, I can’t bear them. I can’t walk in them, they hurt my feet so,’ and with this exclamation, they were kicked off very unceremoniously, and she sprang up and ran into the other room in terror, lest her feet should again be thrust into the dreaded articles.

This was a great disappointment to her motherly friend, who had felt great compassion for the naked feet and legs. ‘What ails the child, I’m sure the shoes are big enough, indeed, they are too long, and I had to stuff some cotton in the toes. Now, just come and let me put them on; there’s a good girl. I thought to send you home so nice like.’

But no,—all the coaxing and all the expostulation was in vain; Kitty mutinied against the shoes, but was disposed to look favourably upon the stockings, which she, no doubt, felt very warm and comfortable; but she was a decided advocate of freedom, and would not have her little feet imprisoned.

‘Well, Kitty,’ Mrs Brunton said at length, ‘if you won’t wear the shoes you must take the stockings off, they’d soon be hanging about your feet, and I took such pains to mend them up well for you.’ Even this

alternative had no effect in altering the child's determination; she submitted, though somewhat reluctantly, to the stockings being taken off; and then the hat and shawl being put on, she was allowed to depart, but not without a charge from Mrs Brunton to 'keep herself clean, and not tear her clothes, now she was decent;' and then, after watching the transformed Kitty, with admiring eyes, she closed the door, and returned to Mary, saying:—

'Now, I think we've managed to make her very respectable; she doesn't look like a beggar girl at all; I think her mother will hardly know her, but its a pity she wouldn't wear the shoes.'

Both Mary and her mother, nevertheless, felt great satisfaction in the work they had accomplished, and little anticipated the sad disappointment which was in store for them.





CHAPTER VIII.



OW needful it is for us to keep in mind the injunction, 'Be not weary in well-doing,' so often do we meet with disappointments and failures in our efforts to do good. But if we do it from love to God as well as from love to our fellow-creatures, we shall not ultimately lose our reward.

Mrs Brunton and Mary were to see their charitable efforts, on behalf of their little friend, rewarded in a way they had not anticipated.

Kitty's arrival at the cottage was even more eagerly looked for than usual, on the day succeeding her new equipment; hour after hour passed away, but she came not, and there were many surmises as to the cause of her absence. The next day came, but still the child did not appear; on the third day the family were all disposed to share Mary's fear, that Kitty

had met with some accident. Poor Mary! the remembrance of her own misfortune made her more ready to suggest such a reason for her friend, and she wept bitterly at the thought. Her kind friend and teacher, Miss Marr, coming in, was soon made aware of the cause of her favourite's grief, and at once volunteered to make inquiries after the missing Kitty; Mary giving her the information she had herself received as to Mrs O'Brian's residence.

Miss Marr lost no time, but went at once on her errand, directing her steps to one of the poorest, and by no means the most respectable, part of the town. She was a district visitor, and used to scenes of poverty and wretchedness, but, as she threaded her way through the dirt and squalor that beset her path, both eyes and ears were disgusted with the sights and sounds she could not avoid—nothing but the charity of her mission could have given her courage to proceed. Oh, how she longed to bring into the fold of the Good Shepherd these poor wanderers in the ways of sin and wickedness, but she could only lift up her heart in prayer to Him, 'who is able to save to the uttermost,' and hurry on.

She was not sorry when she reached the place she was in search of. At the bottom of the common stair stood two policemen; and as she passed them to ascend, one of them told her to 'take care,' for

'they were a bad lot 'up there.' This was not very encouraging, but Miss Marr comforted herself that she could call upon these men in case of need, for protection. So she went up, flight by flight, of the dirty broken stair, till she reached the top, and then knocked at the first door she came to. Again and again she knocked, but getting no answer, she tried to lift the latch, and after a vigorous push or two, the door was opened, having been fastened inside by a piece of string.

At first the visitor was so overpowered by the mingled odour of dirt, whisky, and tobacco, that she could scarcely encounter it; but she did, and then perceived the only inmate, a repulsive, middle-aged woman, sitting on a low stool, her arms crossed, and rocking herself over a few embers smouldering in the grate. A short pipe in her mouth, a broken cup and bottle by her side, too surely marked her habits, and sufficiently accounted for her wretched and loathsome appearance.

The woman stared at the lady, but did not speak; the latter broke the silence.

'Are you Mrs O'Brian?'

'No.'

'Is this where she lives?'

'What do you want to know for?'

'I came to ask for her little girl Kitty.'

'What do you want with her?' and then the

woman added, in the same surly tone, ‘there’s no child here, I tell you ; did the police send you ?’

Miss Marr feeling, from the woman’s dogged manner, that she could get no information, took one more glance round the wretched apartment, and left, with compassion in her bosom for the misery and degradation in which these her fellow-creatures were living, caused, as she feared, by their own sinful habits.

The room was slanting in the roof. A tall man could not have stood upright in the highest part. A stump-bedstead was in one corner, with a filthy mattress and ragged blankets upon it ; and in the opposite corner was a heap of straw, with some pieces of old carpet over it : it could hardly be dignified with the name of bed, although it appeared to have been occupied as such. An old broken table, a chair with the bottom partly out, and a dilapidated chest, completed the furniture of the miserable place, with the exception of the stool the woman occupied. A solitary pane of glass lighted this den,—for such indeed it was.

On descending the stairs, Miss Marr met some children, of whom she inquired for the O’Brians. They told her that there was an Irishwoman and a little girl in the room above ; that they kept lodgers—a man and his wife—but that was all they knew. As a last effort, she asked the policemen, whom she still found waiting at the bottom.

'O'Brian,' said the man she addressed ; 'is that the woman we want, Jim?'

The officer addressed took a paper out of his pocket, and looking at it, replied, 'No ; its Bridget Reilly, and there's nothing about a child. But, ma'am,' addressing the young lady, 'there's lots of Irish about here.'

This last piece of information was not in the least satisfactory ; so Miss Marr had no alternative but to retrace her steps, considerably disappointed that her expedition had been so fruitless in its result, and feeling really grieved that she could not in any way relieve the anxiety of Mrs Brunton and Mary.

It seemed more than probable that Mrs O'Brian (if that indeed was her name) had removed to some other locality, and it would be in vain to make further inquiries ; so nothing more could be done, but to speculate upon the cause of Kitty's absence.

Only a few days, however, were to pass in this uncertainty ; for one morning, when Mrs Brunton was busily cleaning her cottage entrance, she was surprised by seeing a police officer enter the yard, accompanied by a wretched-looking woman and a ragged child, who kept close behind them. They came forward at once to her, and she recognised the man as having been a policeman on the railway, and a great friend of her brother's. He was now an inspector. At

the same time, the man recognised her as Peter Gray's sister, and addressed her with evident surprise.

'Why, Mrs Brunton, how is this; there surely must be some mistake. Come here, girl,' and he dragged forward the little dirty object, who was trying to conceal herself behind him, and who proved to be no other than the truant Kitty, if possible more ragged and squalid than ever. 'This woman,' continued the man, 'charges you with stealing her child's clothes, but I can't think you could go to do such a thing as that.' Then, addressing Kitty, he asked—

'Is this the woman that was kind to you, and took your clothes?'

'Yes,' faltered out Kitty, and added something else, which was quite inaudible amidst her sobs.

It cannot be wondered at that worthy Mrs Brunton was indignant at the charge, and first vented her anger on the unfortunate Kitty.

'You ungrateful little thing, do you not know that I sent you home neat and clean, and with decent clothes on your back. Where are they? what have you done with them?' Then turning to the officer, she said, 'If it's the rags I took off her, you're welcome to them, I'm sure; they're in the back place. I was going to have burnt them, but I'm glad I didn't, and you'll get them this minute; but I'd like to know

where the good tidy clothes have gone, that I and Mary made to her.'

All this time the woman, who was evidently intoxicated, but not too much so to be ignorant of what was passing, was making threatening gestures to Kitty, and vainly attempting to get hold of her; but the man kept a firm hold of the child, and turning to her, asked,

'Did this good woman give you clothes?'

'Yes,' was the answer.

'Where are they?' The child muttered something amidst her sobs and tears, of which the only distinct words were, 'Mother took them.'

'Oh, oh,' exclaimed the police sergeant, 'the tables are turned, I think, this must be looked into; you'll please to come with me to the police office, and I'm sorry to have troubled you, Mrs Brunton, but I'll see to it, and come and let you know how things turn out,' so saying, he was about to go away, when Mrs Brunton, who had fetched Kitty's old rags, threw the bundle at the woman, and desired her to take them.

Kitty turned a longing pleading look to her friend, but the latter angrily turned away and shut the cottage door, bitterly disappointed at this result of her humble efforts to do good to the poor child, and vexed to think how it would distress Mary.



CHAPTER IX.



T can hardly be wondered at that Mrs Brunton should feel annoyed at the charge made against her. 'Me steal her rags, indeed ; I'm glad, though, I didn't burn them, as I'd a mind to do. A long time it will be before I take a beggar into my house again. I'm sorry, too, for the poor child ; I think she looked hungry, I wish I had given her a piece.'

Thus pity prevailed over anger in the good woman's bosom ; Mary, however, was inconsolable, and shed many tears over the loss of her little friend, whom she despaired of seeing again, for she judged that Kitty, after what had passed, would be ashamed to show herself at the cottage ; and probably this would have been the case, had the child been left to herself, but a wise Providence had ordered it otherwise.

Three days only had elapsed, when, on answering a knock at the cottage door, Mrs Brunton was astonished to see inspector Jackson, with Kitty O'Brian in his hand, accompanied by her brother Peter, and a gentleman.

'Please to let us come in, Mrs Brunton,' said the former, 'we want to speak to you.'

The officer then proceeded to state, that on taking Kitty's mother to the police office on the day of his previous visit, she had been recognized by two other officers as answering the description of a woman they had for some time been in search of, as implicated in a serious charge of robbery and murder. Her accomplices had previously been arrested, and Bridget Reilly, or O'Brian, had been brought before a magistrate that morning, and fully committed for trial. The child was about to be sent to the workhouse, when inspector Jackson, who had some communication with Peter Gray, suggested to the magistrate that he knew a respectable woman, who, he thought, would take care of the girl until the result of her mother's trial could be known, provided a small weekly sum could be guaranteed to her; and then related what had taken place about the clothes, as well as some facts he had since heard from his friend Peter, regarding the kindness the Bruntons had shown to the beggar child.

A gentleman, who was standing by and heard the

officer's story, at once said, if the magistrate would agree to this, that he would himself contribute a small weekly sum, and would also use some influence he had, to get Kitty into the Ragged School, and in the meantime he would accompany Jackson to Mrs Brunton's, to see what arrangement could be made. The magistrate gladly acquiesced, and handed over to the gentleman a sum of money from the poor-box, towards Kitty's maintenance, until some allowance could be got from the parish. At the door of the court-room they met Peter Gray, who offered to accompany them to his sister's.

After the inspector had made this statement, Mr Renton, the gentleman who had accompanied the party, stepped forward and said,

'Well, Mrs Brunton, are you willing to accept this charge ; it would be the means of rescuing this child, under Providence, from a life of sin and wickedness, and I will undertake to see you paid a small weekly sum to cover your extra expense. I will also try to get her admitted into the Ragged School, where she will get a great part of her food, and, I think, among some lady friends of mine, I can get her fitted out with decent clothes. I know what *you* have done yourself in this way—and how you have been rewarded. But now, what do you say ?'

Mrs Brunton looked evidently in doubt what she

should say, and paused before she made any reply ; at length she said, ' Well, sir, I would rather wait and see what Thomas, my husband, says ; and you see, sir, I shouldn't like to have that drunken woman coming to abuse me—and—'

But here Jackson stopped her : ' No fear of that, my good woman, no fear of that ; I think it's pretty certain she'll be put where she will neither trouble you or the public for some time ; but it just comes to this, if you'll not take the child, the parish must.'

While the officer was speaking, Kitty had wriggled herself out of his hand, and had stolen quietly behind Mrs Brunton ; and sliding her little dirty hand into the friendly one beside her, looked up so beseechingly into her face, that it was easily seen the kind mother's heart had decided. She grasped the little hand, so confidently placed in her own, drew the little child forward and asked, ' Kitty, would you like to come and live with me and Mary ?'

' Yes, I would,' answered the girl, very decidedly, and with glistening eyes.

' Very well, dear, so you shall ; gentlemen, if the "gudeman" has no objection, and I don't think he will have, I'll take her, and,' she added, reverently, ' I trust God will enable me to do my duty by her.'

Having obtained such a satisfactory result to their mission, Mr Renton again assured Mrs Brunton that

he would see her duly paid, and look after Kitty from time to time ; he placed a sovereign in her hands, he told her, for present expenses, as this addition to her family might call for some extra outlay.

The visitors were about to leave, when Peter Gray came forward, and addressing Mr Renton, said, ‘If you please, sir, I should like to do something for the little one ; I’ve neither wife nor child, and I could spare a sixpence a week, and not miss it much, if you’d accept it.’

‘Gladly, my good fellow,’ said the gentleman, ‘I accept your aid with pleasure, glad to have such a fellow-helper. I hope you do this for the love of Him who said, “Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” And now we will take our leave of you, Mrs Brunton, for the present.’

As soon as her visitors had taken their departure, the good woman, with her instinctive hatred of dirt, proceeded to subject Kitty’s hands and face to the purifying effects of soap and water, and her tangled locks to a little brushing. This was all the improvement she could make in her appearance ; and then, with the child still clinging to her, she took her into Mary.

‘There’s Kitty, Mary, come again to see you, and maybe she’s going to bide a time with us.’

The bright smile that lit up the sick girl's face, sufficiently told her joy at these tidings; and, raising herself as well as she could, she caught hold of her little friend's hand, and drawing Kitty towards her, pressed a warm kiss on her cheek. 'I'm so glad, Kitty, you've come back to us. Mother, it will be so nice to have her with us.' This was said in a breath; but when she noticed the poor dirty rags, her countenance fell, and, in a disappointed tone, she added: 'But we've no clothes to give her now, what shall we do to make her clean and tidy? she's not fit to be seen now—Oh please, mother! do put on her some of mine; I think they'll not be much too large for her.'

By dint of pleading Mary carried her point; and Mrs Brunton proceeded to array the poor child in some of her daughter's garments. They were somewhat too large for poor Kitty's stunted emaciated little body; but with a little management, she was made to look as Mary said—'tidy.'

When Thomas Brunton and the boys came home at night, they found their new inmate comfortably seated on a low stool by the fire, quietly enjoying the unwon'ted luxury of a clean and well ordered household.

When the 'gudeman' of the house had heard from his wife a full account of the events of the day, he cheerfully assented to Kitty being received into the

family. 'Well, wife,' he said, 'we must do our best for her; I think she will not be the worse of coming to us, poor thing.'

So the beggar child was duly installed into her new home; that night she slept in a 'shake-down' in Mary's room; and the next day a little crib was purchased with the money Mr Renton had given, in which little three-years-old Susie, who had hitherto shared her sister's bed, was to be put, while Kitty took the place by her friend. This arrangement had been made at Mary's urgent entreaty; and when night came, and the two girls rested side by side with each other, it would be difficult to say which was the most perfectly happy,—Mary, at having realized her oft cherished wish, that the poor beggar girl might be rescued from her life of misery and ignorance; or Kitty, who, as she lay for the first time on a clean and comfortable bed, and gazed with admiring eyes on the homely blue and white check curtains, and the orderly, though scantily furnished room, with her kind friend beside her, seemed to have been carried into a fairy world, and could hardly believe it a reality. But in one respect Mary's happiness was the most complete; she could lift up a grateful heart to her heavenly Father, and thank Him that He had heard and answered her prayers. Kitty had yet to learn the comfort and blessedness of prayer.

A very few days brought Mr Renton back, accompanied by a lady, and a servant carrying a very large bundle of clothes, — some, he said, were for Kitty O'Brian, and the rest might be useful among Mrs Brunton's own children. Both Mary and her mother so plied their needles diligently, and soon had their new inmate once more decently clad ; and when this was done, the former begged hard that Kitty might be taken to Church. This was at length granted ; and on the first Sunday after her arrival, Kitty, for the first time in her young life, entered the house of God.

They attended the afternoon service, that being rather shorter than the morning one, Mrs Brunton herself going at that time, leaving David, the eldest boy, to take care of the invalid at home. Kitty was placed between her two new guardians, and was for a long while very quiet. She seemed lost in wonder at the size of the building, larger than any she had ever been in before, and gazed curiously at the many well-dressed people. She stood open-mouthed at the singing, unlike anything she had ever heard ; but it could hardly be wondered at that, during the sermon, she became somewhat restless. A child who had spent all her lifetime running wild about the streets, could not be expected to sit perfectly still and silent, listening to a discourse for which her mind had not

yet sufficiently expanded to comprehend ; so, after fidgetting a little, she fell asleep, the good mother sufficiently sympathising with the child, to permit the little head to be confidingly laid upon her lap, and only disturbed it when the sermon was concluded. Then, as the clergyman concluded with ‘The Lord’s Prayer,’ Kitty recognised it as the one Mary had taken such trouble to teach her ; and clasping her little hands together, she silently repeated it after the minister, as well as she was able ; and, doubtless, the simple worship of this little lamb was not unacceptable to Him who said, ‘Suffer little children to come unto me ; and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.’

When Kitty O’Brian returned to the cottage, she flew at once to Mary’s room, and her first exclamation was—‘Mary ! the gentleman asked God for his daily bread !’

‘And he asked Him, too,’ said Mary, ‘to forgive his trespasses or sins ; for, you know, Kitty, I have told you that we are all sinners, and sinning against God continually, and have even more need to pray for forgiveness, than for our daily bread. But, Kitty, how did you like the Church ?’

‘Well, I never did see such a grand place, and so large, and such a great many fine people in it ; and then the singing was beautiful, I was always sorry

when they left off. Do you think I could ever sing like that ?'

You must try and learn, Kitty, and then you can sing in Church too, that is, when you can read the hymns ; you can begin to-night, I'll try and teach you the words, for on Sunday nights father has family worship in my room ; we sing a hymn first, and then he reads a chapter in the Bible, and then he prays, and Oh, I'm so glad when Sunday night comes ! it's so nice to have father and mother and all beside me, though there's little enough room for them ; but the little ones sit upon my bed.'

Such was the conclusion of what might be called Kitty's first Christian Sabbath ; all previous ones had been passed amidst sin and wickedness ; no ray of holy light illumined them, nothing but the Church bells, and the closed shops, made this day to differ from the other six. It was indeed a gracious Providence that had rescued this child from such a life of heathenism. Very fervently did Thomas Brunton pray, 'that God would enable them so to train up the little one committed to their care, that she might become one of the lamb's of His flock.'





CHAPTER X.



BEFORE a very long time elapsed Bridget O'Brian's trial came on. It is not necessary to enter minutely into it; suffice it to say, she was found guilty of aiding and abetting others in a case of robbery and murder, and was sentenced to imprisonment for life. The arrangement made for Kitty was confirmed; she was to remain with the kind people into whose family she had been adopted, and efforts were to be made to get her admitted into the Ragged School for her education.

The poor child must not be judged harshly, if she showed no grief at this total separation from her mother, from whom she had never received the loving care and kindness of a parent; on the contrary, all remembrances of her mother were associated with angry words, and blows, hunger and neglect; while from comparative strangers, she had experienced nothing but affection

and tenderness. Was it to be wondered at, then, that the change in the child's life was to her a very happy one. Kitty had naturally a warm and loving heart, but hitherto, her young life had been too wretched to call forth the exercise of these traits, and, as it is said, 'love begets love,' so it was with the little beggar girl. Her attachment to Mary was unbounded ; her greatest ambition was to become like her ; her greatest happiness, to do any little service for her.

As time wore on, Mary so far recovered, as to be able to leave her bed, though the medical men gave too much reason to fear, that the injury she had sustained, would cause lameness for life, and delicacy of health ; and they recommended that she should be taught some sedentary occupation, by which she might earn a livelihood, as active service would be injurious to her. Following out this advice, it was arranged that she should be apprenticed to some cousins of her mother's, who were dressmakers, and living so near to the Bruntons, as to render it practicable for Mary, with the aid of her crutch, to go to and fro daily. There we must leave her for the present, and go back to her little friend.

The Bruntons were not without their difficulties and anxieties with respect to Kitty. Her young life had hitherto been too exclusively spent among evil companions, and scenes of wickedness and vice, not

to be morally contaminated therewith, and it was evident that a great deal of care and patience would be needed before the pernicious weeds could be rooted out, and the soil prepared for the good seed ; but earnest prayer was not wanting to the Lord of the harvest, that He would cultivate the heart of this little one, that at the last she might be gathered into His garner.

For sometime after Kitty came to her new house, all was so novel and strange to her, that she was somewhat bewildered with it, and she was submissive and docile ; but after a while, longings after her old wandering life returned ; more than once she disappeared from her new home, and was either brought back by the police, or finding, when she plied her old beggar trade, that her decent attire and more robust appearance, did not excite the pity bestowed on her former rags and misery, she returned of her own accord, to her only true friends, penitent and famishing, with many promises of amendment.

At length Mr Renton succeeded in getting her admitted into the Ragged School ; and the teaching and discipline enforced there, completely eradicated her Arab habits, and she yielded cheerful obedience to both home and school arrangements. She was naturally quick and observant, with a very retentive memory, and with an eager desire for knowledge. She

made rapid progress in her education, and was equally apt in acquiring a knowledge of the various kinds of household work, wisely taught to these poor children.

Kitty attended Church and Sunday School regularly, and one evening in the week went with Mary to Miss Marr's Bible Class. The Holy Scriptures became a source of great delight. The Bible seemed really to be 'light and life' to her; and perhaps nothing showed more truly the value she placed upon it, than the anxiety she often expressed, that her poor mother could be taught to read and love the precious Book too. There were many reasons for hoping that a good and holy work had begun in the young girl's heart; the habits of cunning and lying she had been taught from her earliest years, were now entirely abandoned, and she became scrupulously truthful and honest.

There was a marked change in her feelings towards her mother; any allusion to her seemed to make the poor child shrink and tremble; she never had experienced anything but cruel neglect from her, never been taught anything by her but sin and wickedness; was it any wonder, then, that Kitty O'Brian could not mention her name without fear and dread? But now all was different. She often expressed a wish that she could see her parent, that she could know if she was well; and as soon as she was able to write with any freedom, she begged to be allowed to write

to her. The wish was of course granted, and Mr Renton got the letter duly conveyed to its destination, and it was believed that the letter was, by God's blessing, the means of kindling a feeling of contrition, and a yearning after a better life, in the poor convict's mind.

Kitty's gratitude to her adopted parents, and all who had befriended her, was deep and lasting. She never tired of assisting Mrs Brunton in her household labours, early and late she laboured, and was never happier than when the good mother would sit down quietly at her needlework, and let her busy herself in household affairs after her return from school in the evening ; neither did her love and admiration of Mary, her first friend, abate—she was still the model of her young life, and the pattern she looked up to for imitation ; and Mary was gratefully happy at the result of her deed of charity, and thanked God that He had permitted her to do something for His service.





CHAPTER XI.



FEW years passed on, Kitty O'Brian grew up a stout, strong, very comely girl; indeed, her prepossessing appearance at once attracted a lady, who had gone to the Ragged School to see if there was any of its inmates whom the schoolmistress and matron could recommend, as she required a young person in the nursery to assist her nurse, a respectable woman, who had been several years in the family.

Let me here say, in passing, that there is no greater deed of benevolence or charity, than for ladies, who have respectable servants, to take young girls, from time to time, to train under them. If they are good for anything, it is almost sure to lead to a life of respectable servitude;—families are so glad to have girls thus trained, that there is little difficulty in getting suitable

situations for them. One half of the bad servants we hear of are made so by their first setting out in life. Poor people are often so glad to get their children off their hands, that before they have obtained anything like sufficient education, they allow them to go to people as poor as themselves, for a mere pittance, or merely their food, 'to mind the baby.' They are allowed to wander all day on the streets, carrying their little burden, seeing and hearing things that a girl cannot see or hear without contamination, and contracting an idle, wandering, gossiping habit, which they rarely lose; not to speak of more serious injury to the young mind, which, like paper, easily takes a stain, but does not easily lose it. Indoors they see nothing but dirt, bad management, and untidiness, and the absence of all the decencies of life. Equally bad is the life of a message girl,—these young creatures, travelling the streets early and late, are exposed to many evils and temptations.

But to return to Kitty. Mrs Manson, the lady we have mentioned, was at once prepossessed with the appearance of the girl, no longer the miserable, emaciated, dirty little creature we first introduced to our readers, but a tall, stout, comely girl of fourteen, verging on womanhood. Her teachers spoke kindly and well of her, related a little of her history, and referred the lady to Mrs Brunton. Next day Mrs Manson

visited the cottage, and had a conversation with the good woman, who had so long acted a parent's part to the almost orphan. Everything about the cottage spoke of a good example, and a healthy, cleanly, decent upbringing, and the lady decided on receiving Kitty into her household, and arranged for her entering the situation in the course of a month.

There was a general feeling of regret in the Brunton family, at the prospect of losing their young friend ; at the same time, they rejoiced that such a good opening had offered for the girl ; and knowing how entirely dependant she must be upon her own exertions for a livelihood, they were much too wise and judicious to show anything but encouragement to Kitty, on this, her first start in life.

But there were some very important and serious considerations to be entered upon. Poor Kitty's wardrobe was rather a slender one, as may be supposed ; just her every day clothes, and a change a little better for Sundays ; these would scarcely be suitable for a servant in a gentleman's household, and Mrs Manson had spoken of aprons, and morning and afternoon caps, and wrappers, etc., etc. Mrs Brunton too, had been a servant herself in earlier years, and knew well what was needful to make a servant appear clean, tidy, and respectable ; so one evening, when uncle Peter had called in, the little house-

hold resolved itself into a committee of ways and means.

Mrs Brunton suggested, that she thought she had one or two articles she might be able to spare, and then uncle Peter, who had been silently thinking over the subject, said, 'Well, as Kitty is going to do for herself now, she'll not want my sixpence a week much longer, and as I have a little money in the Savings Bank, I don't care tho' I was to take out ten shillings. If I should come to want it, Kitty could pay it back some day, out of her wages.'

'Oh, yes,' said Mrs Brunton, 'Kitty would do that, I am sure, and ten shillings will go a long way; cotton cloth is not so dear now, and Mary's quite good at the cutting out, so we'll easy get the things made.' Mary professed herself ready for any amount of work on her friend's behalf, and Thomas closed the conference by saying, 'There's no fear, mother, but the lassie will be weel provided for, the good Lord is 'the Father of the fatherless,' and He has aye been good and kind to Kitty, and to all of us.'

The truth of Thomas' assurance was verified the next day, for, in the morning, inspector Jackson, who had heard from his friend Peter, of Kitty's good fortune, called and left a half-crown with Mrs Brunton, to buy some little thing for the poor girl, in whom he had always felt an interest; and soon after, Mr Renton, who

had been paying one of his frequent visits to the Ragged School, and had there been told of the change that was to take place in the young girl's prospects, came to the cottage with a nice Bible and a pound note, as he wished her, he said, to make a decent entrance into service, especially as Mrs Manson was a distant relative of his own, so that he should still have opportunities for seeing and hearing of her occasionally. He also added, he was desired to say from the Ladies' Committee of the school, that they would supply any deficiencies.

Such a respectable outfit as Kitty was likely to have, through the kindness of the friends God had so mercifully raised up for her, entailed the necessity of a chest to contain it. 'Oh yes, certainly, Kitty must have a chest,' said Mr Brunton, and he and his son Davie would set to work and make it in their off hours; he knew his master would let him have the wood cheap, and they would paint it, and have it nice by the time it was wanted.

The object of all these preparations, and of all this kindness, listened, with wondering ears, to these arrangements, scarcely crediting that they were made on her behalf. She, the poor beggar girl, the child of a drunken thief (if not worse), that she should be the possessor of all these good things; she could scarcely believe the reality—but it was a reality, and she knew

who it was that had put it into the hearts of Christian people thus to befriend the little vagrant, and devoutly did she thank her heavenly Father for His merciful loving kindness to her, and fervently she prayed that she might be one of His little flock.

Kitty left school some little time before she went to Mrs Manson, that she might assist her adopted mother and sister in their preparations for her. In due time everything was finished to the satisfaction of all parties. Mrs Brunton had made a very nice selection of articles, everything good, neat, and respectable of its kind ; nothing gaudy or unfitted for the station Kitty was about to enter on. It was a very pardonable pride, which was felt by the whole family, when they saw the young girl in her new attire, for it reflected credit upon themselves, and made Kitty look a very comely lass indeed.

So the chest was packed, and Mr Renton's Bible, with a neat cover over it, carefully laid at the top. The last evening in the cottage had come for the orphan, and much earnest and kindly advice was bestowed upon the little maiden, and many injunctions laid upon her by both mother and father; and when the evening was concluded with the usual family worship, Thomas Brunton read the the 25th Psalm, and in his simple prayer offered a special petition for Kitty, that the great and good God would watch over her and protect her,

keep her from falling into temptation, and, above all, make her a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This was the last night that Mary and Kitty were to share the same bed ; much earnest talk there was between the two friends, and after the latter fell asleep, Mary lay long awake, reviewing the past seven years.

She recalled the day she first saw the dirty, ragged little mendicant, the shock head, and hungry face, and cold bare feet ; the shudder she felt when her compassion led her to put her shawl round the poor child's shoulders, in being in close contact with such a filthy object. Then her mind wandered to the time when she prayed to her heavenly Father to enable her to do some good to Kitty O'Brian ; she felt that the prayer had been heard and answered ; she saw how even her own misfortune had been made the means of helping on the good work.

Mary had never repined at her affliction, but now she was almost thankful for it, and when she turned to kiss the sleeping Kitty, whose face, lighted up by a ray of moonlight, shone bright and happy, and healthy, in its peaceful slumber, Mary Brunton was fully repaid for all the toil and trouble she had bestowed upon her young companion.



CHAPTER XII.



MR BRUNTON went home with Kitty to her situation, acting a mother's part to the last, Thomas and his son Davie carrying the chest between them. Mrs Manson was quite pleased with the neat appearance of her new inmate, and took her up at once to the nursery, to introduce her to nurse and the children.

The girl at first, as might be expected, was awkward and diffident, but she was willing, quick, and observant, —three qualifications almost sure to make a good servant, and she visibly improved every day, much to her own and her mistress' satisfaction ; she was not without her faults, and her trials ; the first she always strove to correct when pointed out to her, the second, to bear with patience and cheerfulness ; from time to time she was allowed to visit her only friends the Bruntons, and

when her little troubles and difficulties were confided to the good mother, she was always sure of obtaining sympathy and advice.

Kitty had great advantages with Mrs Manson, as at times, when there was a pressure of work, she was allowed to assist the housemaid or in the kitchen, and even the laundry, and on one occasion, when some of the children, who had been ill, were sent under the governess' care to the country-house for change of air, Kitty accompanied them, and when she had time, got the good natured dairy maid to give her some instruction in butter-making and other dairy work, knowledge which proved of great value to her in after life.

She remained several years in her first situation, and then a cousin of Mrs Manson's, whose husband had just received an appointment in Australia, wrote to Mrs Manson to know if she could recommend an active young servant, who would be willing to accompany them, and was suited for colonial life. Good wages were offered, and Kitty's mistress at once thought that this would be a very desirable opening for her young servant, and that Kitty, with the general knowledge of housework which she had obtained, would be a very suitable and valuable servant for her relatives ; so it was agreed that the proposal should be submitted to the girl's friends, and if they were favourably disposed to the arrangement, Mrs Manson proposed to make over

Kitty to her cousin, though she expressed herself very sorry to part with a servant in whose training she had taken great interest, and who had so amply repaid her by active and faithful service.

It was a great trial both for the Bruntons and Kitty to be so far and entirely separated; but the former were too wise and prudent not to see that it might be for the young girl's advantage; and the latter felt that it was a providential opening, which she ought not to refuse. She did not neglect to take this, as she had learnt to take every difficulty, to Him, who is both the hearer and answerer of prayer, and believed that in her decision she was obeying God's will.

Mr and Mrs Hanley, and their family, were to sail in a few weeks, so Kitty was allowed to go home to her friends at the cottage, to prepare the necessary outfit for so long a voyage. In this both her present and future mistress kindly assisted; she had saved a little money from her wages, and all her other friends contributed some useful gift as a parting remembrance, so, without much difficulty, she was very comfortably provided for. Long ago she had insisted on repaying Peter Gray his ten shillings, and now he desired his sister to lay out that sum on his account, in a neat work-box and working materials.

A few evenings before she was to leave, Kitty came in laden with numerous packages, parting gifts to her

first friends and benefactors,—there was a large print Psalm Book for Thomas, a pretty Hymn Book for Mary, and something for each one of the young people ; but the largest parcel was laid before Mrs Brunton, who, on opening it, found a comfortable warm shawl!

‘Now Kitty,’ said the good woman—though, it must be confessed, with a very pleased look—‘how could you go and spend your money upon this shawl, when you know the old brown one is quite good. I scoured it the other day, and it looks quite fresh again, and will last me many a day yet ; and I don’t know what I can give you.’

‘Ah, but mother,’ said the young girl, ‘I am going to ask you to give me something, and nothing less than the ‘old brown shawl ;’ it has always seemed like a friend to me from the day dear Mary put the end of it round me, the first day we saw each other ; and then you wrapped me up in that same shawl the day you put me in the tub, mother, and washed me. I don’t think I ever felt as comfortable in my life, as when I sat before the fire drinking the nice cup of tea, with the dear old thing round about me : I quite love it, and if you will give it to me, I will keep it all the days of my life.’

Such an appeal could not be resisted, and Kitty became the possessor of the well remembered and much valued article of clothing,—Mrs Brunton con-

gratulating herself that 'she should have thought to scour it but a few days ago, and, considering the years she had kept it, it was wonderful how fresh and well it looked. Nothing like buying a good article at first. Remember that, my dear.'

And so the preparations were completed. The last evening came that Kitty was ever to spend beneath that lowly roof. For the last time within these cottage walls, she mingled her prayers with those who had been her best and dearest friends; and Thomas, in simple but earnest words, fervently commended her to the protecting care of her heavenly Father, that she might show forth, in her daily walk and conversation, that she was a follower of the Lord Jesus, and that though now about to be separated in this world, they might all so live as to be enabled to look forward to a joyful reunion in the world to come.

Kitty's tears flowed fast and freely, as she thought how more than probable it was that they would never more all meet again in this world; but she did not long indulge her grief, feeling that she could trust the future in His hands, who had so kindly and wisely led her all her life long. And when the final parting came on the morrow, it was with hopeful and loving words, and tender wishes on both sides.

In a very few days Kitty O'Brian and her new friends set sail, and nothing more was heard of her

until after their arrival in the new land of their adoption, when Kitty did not fail to write to her friend Mary, to inform her of her being safely landed at her destination, with every prospect of being comfortable. It was a short and simple letter, but full of love and gratitude to the household that had so charitably befriended her when she was friendless ; and there was in it what they valued even more,—an assurance that she had never omitted to read her Bible, and to pray daily for them all, as well as for her poor mother.





CONCLUSION.



AND here we might finish our story, having fulfilled our purpose, in showing how a poor little child like Mary Brunton, was enabled to use her 'one talent,' not to 'hide it in the earth,' but to give it back 'with usury;' for she had been instrumental, through God's assistance (whose help she had fervently sought), in rescuing a fellow creature from a life of degradation, of misery, and of sin, and transforming her into a good and faithful servant, a respectable member of society, and, she had every reason to hope, one of 'Christ's little flock.' Mary had deserved her happiness in the result of her 'good work,' for it *was* a 'good work,' not done to obtain the praise of men, or any merit for herself, but simply and purely out of love to the Saviour, who had suffered death for her, and through whose precious blood she trusted to receive pardon for her sins.

It is by no means my intention to enter into all the details of Kitty O'Brian's future life; yet, if my readers have been at all interested in her, they may wish to know how she prospered in the country to which she had emigrated; and I will therefore condense, in as few words as possible, what more has come to my knowledge respecting her.

She continued several years in Mrs Hanley's service, gaining their esteem and friendship, and their children's affection. Her varied knowledge of household work, made her, indeed, a 'treasure' in an emigrant's family; and no higher praise could be given her than that bestowed by her employers,—that 'in all things she had been found *faithful*.'

Mr Hanley found himself under the necessity of returning to England with his family, after a few years. They would gladly have taken Kitty home with them, but just at that time the principal hotel keeper required a housekeeper for his establishment, his wife having died a few months previously; it was a situation of great trust and responsibility, and he offered very liberal terms to a suitable person.

On this coming to Mr Hanley's knowledge, he proposed to his wife, that it would be a good opportunity to advance Kitty's interests; she cordially agreed with him, and as they had some acquaintance with the gentleman, they lost no time in recommending

their faithful and much valued domestic, feeling sure that she would fulfil her duties in this new sphere as conscientiously as she had done with them. Mr Lumsden was glad to take the recommendation, and Kitty again changed her abode and entered on new duties, not, however, without a severe heart-pang at the separation from her dear master and mistress, and their children. They, on their side, assuring her, that should she ever return to England, she would find a welcome and a home with them.

Some years Kitty remained in this post, filling it with honour to herself and advantage to her employer. From time to time she wrote her first and best friend, Mary Brunton. Every now and then a more substantial remembrance than a letter reached her early benefactress, and a contribution for the Ragged School, to whose valuable teaching she mainly owed her success in life, was regularly sent; the ample remuneration she received for her services, enabling her to do this, as well as to lay by a provision for a 'rainy day.'

After a lapse of five years, Kitty's engagement with Mr Lumsden came to an end, for she was called to enter on the most important situation a woman can fill—that of Wife. A long letter arrived for Mary Brunton, enclosing a money order for a considerable amount, and announcing the expected change in her friend's life. It told her that a friend of Kitty's master,

who had been many years in Australia, and had a considerable sheep farm 'up country,' in partnership with a younger brother, had sought her for his wife, that having every reason to believe him a good man, and a true Christian, she had, after prayerful consideration, accepted his offer ; but that he had complied with the wishes of Mr Lumsden and herself, and agreed that the marriage should not take place for some months, to enable the former to be on the outlook for a suitable substitute for the housekeeper he was about to lose.

Kitty requested that a certain portion of the money should be laid out by Mary in providing a suitable marriage outfit, 'good and substantial,' she wrote, and 'fitted for a farmer's wife "up country," nothing showy or gay would be suitable;' and then Kitty added, 'Dear Mary, after you have paid yourself for making my clothes (if you will kindly do so), I wish you to use the remainder in buying a dress for each of your sisters, your mother, and yourself; also some useful gift for your good father and the boys; also for uncle Peter; you cannot refuse me, for you know you would have been my bridesmaid had I married in Scotland. I could never, if I tried, repay your family for all they have done for me, but I do wish you all to have some substantial remembrance of me, at this time. Another thing I am anxious about is, that my poor mother should have

some little gift from me, and I have written to Mr Renton, to ask if he would kindly ascertain if the prison authorities would allow me to send some remembrance to her. I have thought of a large print Bible, for I think I told you that I heard, when she was in the hospital, that she had learnt to read, and had expressed a wish to the chaplain, that she could read the Bible.'

All Kitty's requests and wishes were most faithfully complied with, even permission was given for her mother to receive the Bible, as well as a little framed photograph of her child, in which a lock of hair was enclosed. In due time the marriage took place, and Kitty left the Australian city, to go with her husband some hundred miles 'up country,' and, as a farmer's wife, she was in every respect a *helpmate*. She was a happy wife, and, in course of time, became the happy mother of three children. But she was not to be exempted from the usual lot of mortals; 'The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth;' and He saw fit to take her firstborn to himself, when about three years old.

Again Kitty's earthly home was to be changed. Mr Dickenson, her husband, unexpectedly became heir to a small property, which had been farmed by an uncle, who had lately died; and though Australia had been, on the whole, a kindly and good step-mother to him, his heart turned with yearning to his

mother country, and with mutual agreement it was determined that he and his belongings should return to it. His interests in the colony he could safely leave in his brother's care; and though by no means a wealthy man, he had saved sufficient, not only to meet the expenses of the voyage home, but to pay off some encumbrances on the little estate, and leave a margin for improvements, hoping, by careful and judicious farming himself, to provide a respectable maintenance for his family.

So one day the Bruntons were made glad by tidings, that it was not impossible but that they might once more welcome the still dearly loved child of their adoption. Kitty wrote to them just before she and her family sailed for England, telling them that her husband was as anxious as herself to see those who had so charitably befriended her when she was friendless, and had promised to bring her to Scotland for that purpose, as soon as possible after their arrival at home.

Time, had not passed without many and important changes in the Brunton family. They had fought a long and weary struggle with sickness and poverty, but they were honest industrious people, who had striven hard to bring up their family decently and respectably, above all 'in the fear of the Lord,' and as godliness is profitable for 'the life that now is' as well as 'that which

is to come,' so to Thomas Brunton was that promise fulfilled, for his integrity and uprightness were fully appreciated by his employer, who had now very considerably extended his business. Thomas was advanced from time to time, until at last he was made under manager and overlooker of the concern. The old cottages were pulled down, and in their room stood a neat brick building, partly offices, and partly dwelling-house, with a piece of garden ground carefully kept, and neatly enclosed with green pailings at the back ; on the house door were two shining brass plates ; on the one was simply engraved 'Thomas Brunton,' on the other, 'M. Brunton, Dressmaker,' for our friend Mary carried on *her* business under her father's roof. David the eldest son, was now cashier and clerk. 'Little Tommy,' now grown into a fine stout lad of fifteen, had, through the interest of Mr Skelton, his father's master, been apprenticed to an architect.

But sorrow had mingled in their cup of prosperity, for their second son had been killed by falling from a ladder, and the youngest girl died while yet an infant. Margaret the other daughter, was the 'help' of everybody, assisting her mother in her domestic duties, and her sister in the dressmaking business ; every thing within and without that house, spoke of order, cleanliness, and industry. And though death and sickness had cast their dark shadows more than once over the

household, Mrs Brunton would often say, that Kitty O'Brian had brought a blessing upon them when she came.

And Kitty's mother died, *not* as she had lived, but there was good ground for believing that she had become a sincere and humble penitent. Her former life of sin and intemperance had undermined her constitution; and debarred from her usual stimulants, her health soon gave way, so that she was often in the prison hospital. There, by her own wish she learned to read; and when sufficiently taught to be able to read that precious book 'which maketh wise unto salvation,' remorse for her past life filled her heart. She read that 'no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God,' 'the soul that sinneth it shall die,' and felt that she deservedly came under the condemnation, and for a time she sunk under despair. But she was directed to such passages, as 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin;' 'though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool;' 'whosoever cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' These were indeed precious words to the poor conscience stricken woman; light shown upon her darkness; and she eagerly flew for refuge to the 'hope set before her;' and when some years after she was called to enter into the 'valley of the shadow of death,' her last request to

the good chaplain was, that he would send her blessing to Kitty, to entreat her forgiveness for all the neglect and ill-treatment she had shown her, and to assure her that she died in humble confidence, that she had received pardon through the blood of her Saviour, and had a good hope that, though her own sins had separated them on earth, they would have a joyful reunion in heaven. She sent also her blessing and grateful thanks to the Bruntons.

Bridget O'Brian's death took place not long before her daughter's return to her native country, and a great sorrow it was to Kitty, who had long hoped that if she returned, she might, by some means, get permission to see her once dreaded, but now kindly remembered parent ; yet she could but rejoice, amidst her sorrow, at receiving such a testimony of her mother's dying faith and penitence, and share the anticipation of meeting her where 'sin and sorrow can never enter.'

Mary Brunton never recovered from her lameness ; but in spite of delicate health, was most diligent and successful in her business, and 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.' She never lost an opportunity of doing good. From time to time she took some poor child from the Ragged School, taught her the business, and put her in the way of earning a decent and honest livelihood ; and though, like all who seek to do good, she met at times with ingratitude and

disappointment, she did not become 'weary in well-doing.'

And now, my dear young readers, my object will have been fully realized, if the reading of this little story shall have awakened in one heart the desire to do good ; to use the 'talent' committed to you, however humble, however lowly, for the benefit of some fellow-creature, and for the love of God, your Saviour, remembering, 'To do good and to communicate forget not ;' and likewise the gracious promise, 'Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Farewell.



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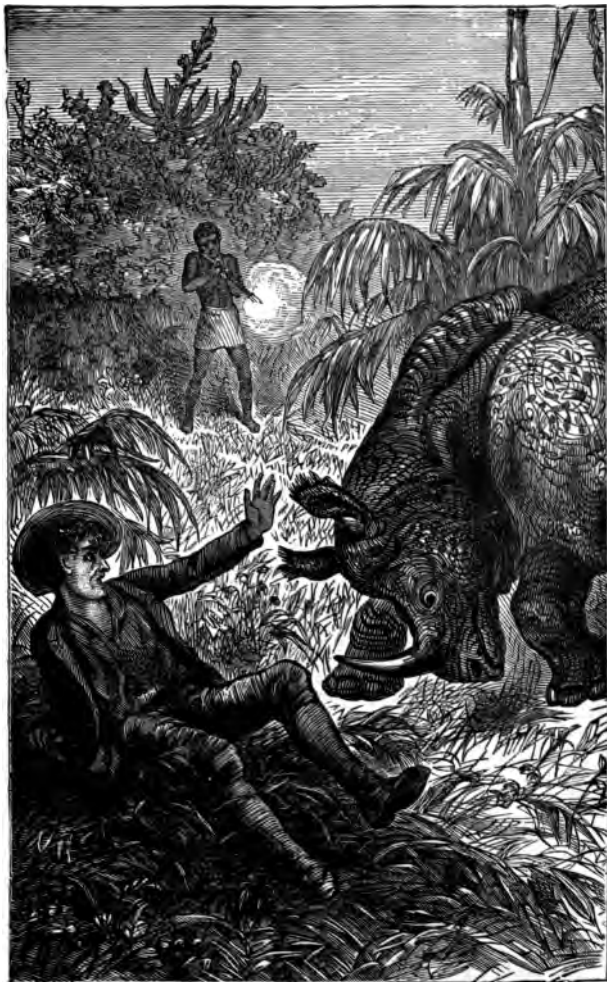
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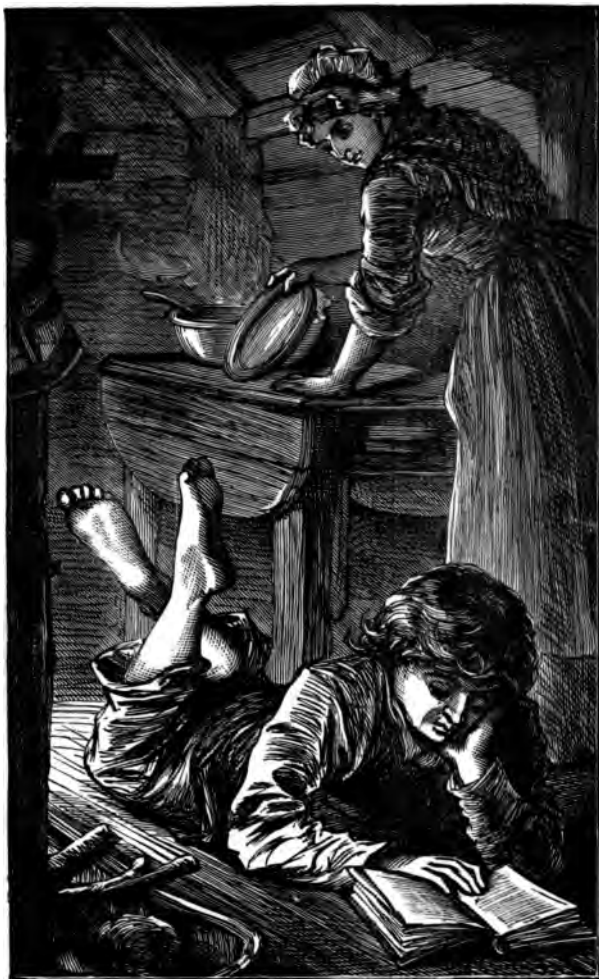
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